



Pastor Jason Zobel

Vicar Dan Anderson

April 30, 2013

Dear Members of the City of Madison Common Council,

On behalf of the parishioners of Mount Olive Lutheran Church and as owners of the property at 4018 Mineral point Road, we write to express our general agreement with the Final Draft version of the Hoyt Park Area Joint Neighborhood Plan to be introduced to you on April 30. For decades, we have benefited from being part of a safe neighborhood which values home ownership, lovely parks, and tree-lined streets, among other public amenities. We hope the Draft Plan – for the most part – will eventually be accepted by the Common Council as an agreed vision for the future of the neighborhood.

We write, however, to point out to you a limited aspect of the Draft Plan that places an inordinate burden on our church property. We hope and pray that some adjustment will be made to eliminate this burden as unnecessary and at odds with some of the important goals of the Neighborhood Plan.

The site of our former church fronts on Mineral Point Road at the intersection with Westmorland Boulevard. Mineral Point Road marks the southernmost boundary of the Hoyt Park Area under consideration. As such, it is at the extreme edge of the neighborhood, adjacent to, but not within, the neighborhood areas recognized as having single-family character.

Our church property at 4018 Mineral point Road is recognized in the Draft Plan as having the potential either to remain as is, or to redevelop. (Page 43) This is reasonable. It is common knowledge that we have been attempting to sell our old church building to another congregation. So far, we have been unsuccessful.

The only viable buyers who have shown an interest in purchasing our property so far have been commercial developers who see an opportunity for razing the church building and creating multi-family housing, perhaps with some commercial space, on the site. It concerns us, therefore, that our church property has been the subject of a petition to maintain the current zoning on the site and opposing building heights greater than two stories.

While such a new use for our church property may be inconsistent with the goals of the petition, we fervently believe that redevelopment of that kind would not be disruptive to the larger goals of the Draft Plan and would, in fact, help achieve some of those goals.

We respectfully disagree with the petition for a number of reasons. One reason is that such a limitation on our congregation's options for sale or redevelopment would unfairly single out our church property to prohibit beneficial uses already well-established and well-accepted on the other outside boundaries of the Hoyt Park Area.

As the Draft Plan recognizes, the north boundary of the neighborhood – marked by University Avenue – is highly developed with commercial and multi-family development. Just a couple of blocks to the east of our church, is the intersection of Mineral Point Road and Speedway Road, which is built up with commercial properties and which, under the Draft Plan, could enjoy further expansion to the benefit of the residents living nearby.

The western boundary (or near-west boundary) of the Hoyt Park neighborhood – Midvale Boulevard – has a good deal of commercial and multi-family construction which has also been beneficial to the neighborhood itself. These are new, attractive, substantial buildings providing both housing and commercial conveniences.

Similarly, Mineral Point Road is identified in the Draft Plan as a major arterial highway, running east and west. It separates the Hoyt Park Area from the Westmorland neighborhood to the south. Mineral Point Road is a Madison Metro bus route. It is one of those “linkages” which is intended for expansion of transportation mode choices, especially bus service.

While much of the Hoyt Park Area is occupied with single-family housing, the neighborhood already encompasses a significant amount of other housing, such as apartments and condominiums. Considering this limited mix and the location of our property on the very edge of the Hoyt Park Area, we believe future development of our church property on Mineral Point Road would not interfere with the overall goals of the Joint Plan.

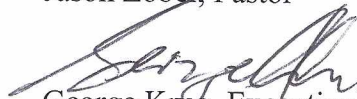
When one looks at how the Hoyt Park neighborhood has developed and survived over the years, we think it can be fairly said that the developments around the periphery of the neighborhood have formed something of a barrier which has allowed the single-family residences within to remain intact.

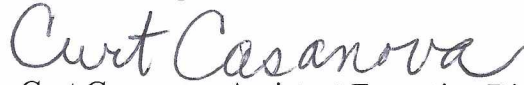
We continue to have strong ties – spiritual, physical and historical – to the Hoyt Park Area. Our congregation purchased the land at Mineral Point Road and Westmorland Boulevard in 1943. In 1947, we had our first worship service in the unfinished basement of our church while it was still under construction. Our congregation met in Hoyt Park for an outdoor worship service in 1951. We built a new, substantially larger church – the white stucco portion of the present church building – on the same site as the original church, in 1962. This was further added onto in 1993 with the addition of the north wing. In 2010, we moved our primary church location out of the Hoyt Park Area to 110 N. Whitney Way.

As Board and Commission review of the Hoyt Park Area Joint Neighborhood Plan proceeds, we expect to continue our participation in the process in the hope that the Final Plan will allow our congregation reasonable flexibility for wider use than the draft version appears to envision. We look forward to working cooperatively and productively with the boards and commissions in the weeks and months ahead.

Very truly yours,



Jason Zobel, Pastor

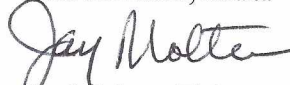

George Krug, Executive Director



Curt Casanova, Assistant Executive Director


Steve Luecke, Chairman Board of Elders

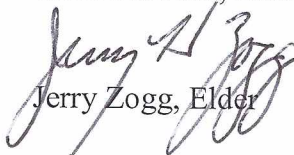

David Bray, Elder


Carl Koehler, Elder


Jay Molter, Elder


Tom Notbohm, Elder


Gene Schoohs, Elder


Jerry Zogg, Elder

cc: Mayor Paul Soglin